



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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## Changes to Regulations for Bycatch Reduction Devices for the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) announces the publication of a final rule that will change the use of bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery. In summary, these changes:

- Decertify the Expanded Mesh BRD.
- Decertify the Gulf Fisheye BRD.
- Establish a more restrictive placement for the Fisheye BRD.

The intent of these changes is to improve bycatch reduction in the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery and better meet the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. These changes are effective **May 18, 2009**.

A BRD is certified for use in the shrimp fishery if testing demonstrates the BRD reduces finfish bycatch 30 percent by weight. The Fisheye BRD must be placed along the top center of the cod end of a shrimp trawl no further forward than 11 feet from the cod end tie-off rings. The Gulf Fisheye BRD is the same fisheye-type device that may be placed 15 meshes on either side of top center, between 8.5 feet and 12.5 feet from the cod end tie-off rings, thus expanding the allowable placement of the device in the cod end. These two (overlapping) configurations of the fisheye-type device are also certified for use in the South Atlantic region.

New data collected aboard Gulf of Mexico shrimp vessels indicated that a fisheye-type device placed more than 9 feet forward in the cod end of the net does not exclude 30 percent of the finfish by weight. Therefore, the final rule will decertify the Gulf Fisheye BRD as it is designated in the regulations, and will restrict the allowable placement of the Fisheye BRD to no farther forward than 9 feet from the tie-off rings.

Similarly, it appears the effectiveness of the Expanded Mesh BRD has decreased. Recent tests of the Expanded Mesh BRD in the Gulf of Mexico indicate it is only achieving about a 17 percent reduction in the weight of total finfish bycatch. The final rule also decertifies the Expanded Mesh BRD in the Gulf of Mexico.

There are no new data collected from the South Atlantic fishery to indicate the BRDs are not meeting the bycatch reduction target; therefore, there will be no changes to the allowable BRDs in the South Atlantic.

Illustrations of the various BRD designs and installation instructions for some of the BRDs can be found at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/BRDs.htm>. Additional questions regarding BRDs and their installation should be directed to the Harvesting Technology Branch, NOAA Fisheries Service, Mississippi Laboratories, Pascagoula Facility, 3209 Frederic Street, Pascagoula, Mississippi 39568-1207; phone 228-762-4591.

This bulletin provides only a summary of the information regarding the final rule. Any discrepancies between this bulletin and the final rule published in the *Federal Register* will be resolved in favor of the *Federal Register*.

### How Can We Improve These Fishery Bulletins?

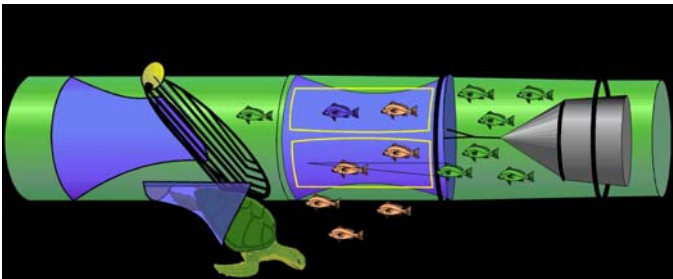
If you have any suggestions on how we may improve future fishery bulletins please contact:

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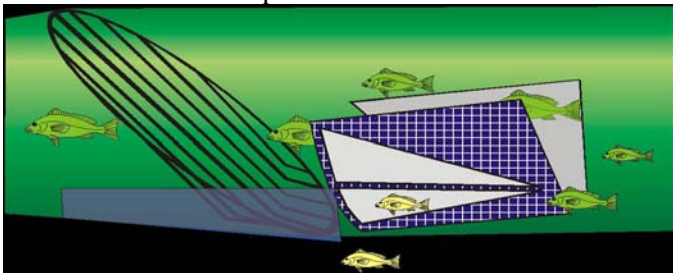
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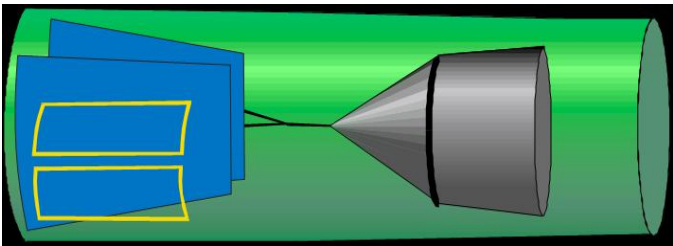
Jones-Davis BRD



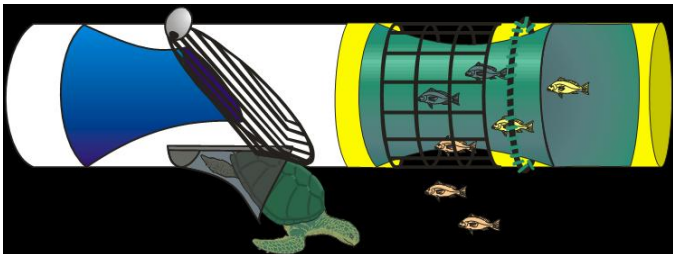
Composite Panel BRD



Modified Jones-Davis BRD



Extended Funnel BRD



Fisheye BRD

